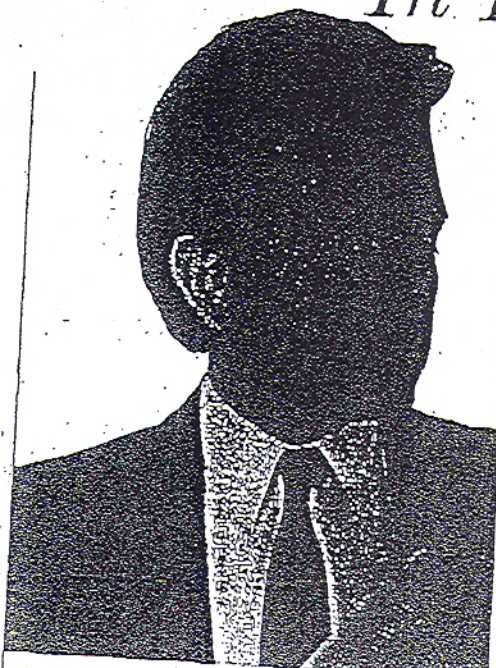


In Defense of Elitism



What Sally Frank and other philistines should know.

By H. W. Crocker III

Certainly no graduate of Princeton University can think that men and women are in all parts equal. Even in the most savage of savage states sexual equality does not obtain.

Certainly every Princetonian recognizes the need for men and women to occasionally commune with their own kind, and acknowledges that clubs exist to exclude members and are by definition elitist, and must admit that Miss Frank could have formed her own club, say, the Sourgrapes Club, if she had so desired.

But Miss Frank isn't interested in facts or common sense. She isn't interested in solving problems. She is interested in creating them. Sally Frank is a revolutionary, a troublemaker, and an advocate of an inverse elitism, *elitism vulgaris*, an elitism of equality, or, in other words, snobbish egalitarianism. (Revolutionaries are always snobs.)

Punk rockers consider themselves elitists too, but they're merely proletarian snobs. They'll beat, mock, and spit upon anyone who doesn't know that "Dead Children Eat Vomit" by Joe Trash and the Mucious Membranes is a parody of "Dead Cats on the Freeway" which itself is a parody of "There's Blood in My Soup."

But as George Will '68 would say, and I would agree, the classical composer represents elitism, rightly understood, and the punks represent a *soi-disant* elitism that is vile and dangerous. For elitism is nothing more than the setting of standards which the vulgar cannot attain, but should recognize.

If they hew to elitist standards, rightly understood, they will transcend the vulgar masses and more fully appreciate the value of western civilization. But if they rise Prometheus-like with their own set of elitist standards the result is punk musique with is crude, pedantic, pop-culture hubris and women trying to become men for the greater glory of sexual liberation.

It should be remembered that elitism is hardly a stifling and oppressive creed. Elitist standards have altered with the tide of history. What was elitist to the ancient

Greeks may not be elitist today (and that can cause incredible confusion amongst the most regal and serious of elitist classicists). Indeed, the fatty portions of a steak that a Princeton man might save in case he had Yale company are the very parts that were given to Achilles, Ajax, and Agamemnon as the choicest cuts.

One can imagine how horrified a Princeton man might be were he to treat a Yale friend to a plate of greasy steak grizzle and were to offer the Yales's young daughter (for whom he felt sympathy) a piece of his steak — only to be reprimanded by the girl's father.

"How dare you offer my daughter your file! We eat only the fat of the steak just like Achilles, Ajax, and Agamemnon."

The Princeton man would throw his wrist over his eyes and quite dutifully exclaim: "My gawd! I'm guilty of elitist relativism!"

Which is, to be quite honest, something that does happen. But it is a comparatively minor problem and, at least in the case above, one with no villains. Our real quarrel lies with the arrogant and anarchic Philistines who, like Robert Louis Stevenson's four reformers, seek first to "reduce men to a common level," then "to give them freedom to the sexes," then "to abolish the laws," and then "to abolish mankind."

A world without Maxim's, Britain's Special Air Services Regiment, and the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders would be well nigh intolerable for any people of discernment and taste. A world without punk rockers, Sally Frank, and other insurgents would be cleaner, more decorous, and more aesthetically pleasing. Let's give civilization a chance.

→ People nowadays just don't seem to know their place. Everywhere one turns blacks and hispanics are demanding jobs simply because they're black and hispanic, the physically handicapped are trying to gain equal representation in professional sports, and homosexuals are demanding that government vouchsafe them the right to bear children.

And now... and now come women. Miss Sally Frank, a Princeton alumna, is attempting to sue the University because it harbors three all-male clubs — Cottage Club, Ivy Club, and Tiger Inn — that wouldn't allow her, a putative female, as a member. Why she wanted into these clubs is a mystery. She claims club members poured beer on her and tried to throw her in a fountain.

Some girls like this sort of thing — the wet T-shirt, mudwrestling type. But Miss Frank is not such a girl. She thinks all-male clubs are elitist (she must think men are an elite), and she believes in the levelling of any group that won't have her as a member.

There are roughly a dozen eating clubs at Princeton and only three are of the all-male variety. Perhaps Miss Frank's elitist fantasies take the form of being the only girl in an all-male club or perhaps she wants to sue the University because she wants to get into law school and the experience will look good on her resume.

It was James Fenimore Cooper who said "Equality of condition is incompatible with civilization, and is found only to exist in those communities that are but slightly removed from the savage state."

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